

International Conclave on Justice and Accountability for Rohingya

Venue: Aula B, International Institute of Social Studies (ISS),
Kortenaerkade 12, 2518 AX, The Hague, The Netherlands

Date: 18 October 2019

Time: 8:15 am-7:00 pm

Background

Since 2017, Bangladesh has been hosting over a million Rohingya refugees, also known as ‘Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals’ (FDMN). This is in addition to hosting an already large Rohingya refugee community that has crossed over for decades, resulting in Bangladesh accommodating 4.7% of total global refugee population. The international crimes committed in Myanmar against the Rohingya have triggered a number of accountability initiatives, including a case before the International Criminal Court on forced deportation as a crime against humanity.

Against this backdrop, the Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) of BRAC University, the Asia Justice Coalition, and the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam are organizing an International Conclave to bring focus to the issue of justice and accountability for the Rohingya. The event will call on global experts to provide updates on the status of justice and accountability efforts, as well as offer nuanced insights into the root causes of the crisis and the multiple political and social components needed to forge a durable solution.

Aims of the Conclave

To bring justice and accountability to the centre of the Rohingya refugee crisis, this Conclave is organized around discrete but interconnected aims, which include:

1. Highlight the various justice and accountability initiatives underway globally, as well as the need for multi-faceted approaches toward a sustainable solution
2. Mobilize public and policy support for these initiatives including consolidating a civil society network to advocate for accountability and promote social justice.
3. Examine root causes and ongoing policy challenges in order to inform future advocacy strategies and ensure justice and accountability for the Rohingya

Three main themes of the Conclave are **Atrocity, Accountability and Advocacy**

Programme

Registration

8:15-9:00 am

Inaugural Session of International Conclave

9:00-10:00 am

Welcome Address

Professor Syed Mansoob Murshed, International Institute of Social Studies (ISS),
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Moderator: Manzoor Hasan, Executive Director, Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University

Opening Remarks

Professor Inge Hutter, Rector, International Institute of Social Studies (ISS),
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Professor Vincent Chang, PhD, Vice Chancellor, Brac University

Biraj Patnaik, South Asia Director, Amnesty International/Asia Justice Coalition

Keynote Speakers

H.E. Abubacarr Marie Tambadou, Minister of Justice, Republic of The Gambia

The Honourable Bob Rae, Canada's Special Envoy to Myanmar

PANEL 1: 10:00 – 11:30 am

The Rohingya Crisis and Myanmar's Social and Political Landscapes

A wave of violence and the subsequent displacement of 83,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh from Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State in October 2016 foreshadowed the atrocities that escalated in 2017, when over 700,000 more people were displaced. While the overwhelming scale and severity of violence suffered by the Rohingya people has led to increased global recognition of the need for an international justice process, the Rohingya issue does not exist in isolation.

A range of root causes and underlying dynamics have resulted in the current crisis, including the Rohingya's lack of citizenship and civil rights in Myanmar, and the challenges of forging a social climate of acceptance, pluralism and tolerance for diversity within Myanmar. Experts on armed conflict and governance in Myanmar will provide insight into the broader social and political landscape, enshrined discrimination, and unresolved grievances that have ultimately culminated in the statelessness and expulsion of the Rohingya from Rakhine State.

Given that a durable resolution to the crisis will require substantial changes on the ground in Myanmar, the panel will call on experts to describe the issues that must be resolved and the measures taken thus far, such as the recommendations put forth by the Rakhine Advisory Commission led by Kofi Annan and ways to increase pressure for improvements on the ground.

MODERATOR: Shireen Pervin Huq, Member, Naripokkho Bangladesh

PANELISTS

- **Laetitia van den Assum**, former Dutch ambassador and former member of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State chaired by Kofi Annan: “The Annan Commission, status of implementation and ways to increase pressure on Myanmar”
- **Nickey Diamond**, Human Rights Specialist, Fortify Rights, “The rise of Islamophobia, and politics of citizenship and extraordinary measures against Rohingyas in Myanmar”
- **Brian Gorlick**, University Tutor and Examiner, Refugee Law Initiative, School of Advanced Study, University of London, “Human rights violations and displacement, and the political and operational challenges facing the UN in Myanmar”

Coffee Break

11:30-11:45 am

PANEL 2: 11:45 am-1:15 pm

Justice and Accountability

International consensus is growing that accountability will be an important component of the path forward. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina called for accountability during her recent 27 September speech at the United Nations General Assembly, urging the international community to ensure that the root causes of the Rohingya issue are addressed and that atrocity crimes are accounted for.

This panel will examine the role of international justice as a central component of a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis. Panelists will provide an overview of the current efforts underway to hold perpetrators accountable for atrocities against the Rohingya as well as other ethnic minority groups in Myanmar. Academic and policy experts will provide an update on the current status of accountability efforts, and the likely timeframes, opportunities and limitations of these efforts.

MODERATOR: Dr. Priya Pillai, Head, Asia Justice Coalition Secretariat

PANELISTS

- **Professor Azeem Ibrahim**, Director, Displacement and Migration Program, Centre for Global Policy, USA: “Accountability as a precursor to repatriation”
- **Kingsley Abbott**, Coordinator of the International Commission of Jurists’ Global Accountability Initiative: “Available avenues toward international criminal justice”
- **Tun Khin**, Rohingya leader, Co-Founder, Burmese Rohingya Organization UK: “The international justice imperative and the need for multilateral pressure on Myanmar”

LUNCH BREAK 1:15 – 2:15 pm

PANEL 3: 2:15 – 3:45 pm

Toward Sustainable Solutions: Multi-faceted Engagements for Concrete Action

Given the complexity of the Rohingya crisis, its detrimental impacts continue to ripple across the region and affect myriad stakeholders. As Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina noted in her speech to the UN General Assembly, “Despite all our efforts to contain it, the crisis is now becoming a regional threat.” Those affected by the issue include the Bangladeshi host communities and general public, as well as Myanmar’s neighbors across ASEAN who bear the burden of hosting large refugee populations. While the beginnings of an accountability process are underway, such processes can take many years. In the meantime, it is essential for other efforts to be undertaken to bring about nearer-term solutions, address secondary impacts, and mitigate risks.

Recognizing that each stakeholder affected by this crisis bears unique grievances and unmet needs, this panel will explore the need to consider regional and geopolitical dynamics when working toward solutions. The panel will explore the potential for diplomatic, humanitarian, and human rights actors to address these issues through coordinated yet diversified approaches.

MODERATOR: Farah Kabir, Country Director, Action Aid Bangladesh

PANELISTS

- **Rezaul Karim Chowdhury**, Executive Director, COAST Trust: “Effects of the Rohingya crisis on the host community: Localization, local grievances and the humanitarian response”
- **Yasmin Ullah**, Rohingya activist and founder, Rohingya Human Rights Network: “Overcoming divide-and-rule: Coalition building for advocacy between Rohingya and other Myanmar civilians affected by conflict”
- **Lilianne Fan**, Chair, Rohingya Working Group - Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network: “Beyond indifference: The potential role of ASEAN actors toward rights-based solutions”
- **Professor Imtiaz Ahmed**, Director, Centre for Genocide Studies, Dhaka University: “The geopolitical environment and economic factors underpinning the Rohingya crisis”

Coffee Break

3:45 – 4:00 pm

Concluding Session: The Way Forward

4:00 – 5:30 pm

In this session, panelists will help synthesize key learnings, advocacy and action points emerging throughout the day’s sessions, identify key takeaways, and delineate next steps. They will provide recommendations that will inform the approaches taken by civil society, academic and political actors throughout upcoming advocacy, technical support and stakeholder engagement.

A final statement will be presented that summarizes the issues examined during the Conclave and that outlines ideas for future action; this statement will be shared with media and elaborated in further detail subsequent to the Conclave for future consideration by participants.

MODERATOR: Laetitia van den Assum, Former Dutch ambassador and former member of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State

PANELISTS

Md. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary, Government of Bangladesh

Professor Payam Akavhan, McGill University and Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, The Netherlands

K.A.M. Morshed, Director of Advocacy, Partnership and Technology, BRAC

Nina Tavakoli, Barrister, Red Lion Chambers, UK

Yasmin Ullah, Rohingya Activist and Founder, Rohingya Human Rights Network

Closing Remarks

5:30-5:40 pm

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Ambassador, Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, The Hague, The Netherlands

Vote of Thanks

5:40-5:45 pm

Muhammad Badiuzzaman, Research Coordinator, Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University and PhD Candidate at the ISS-EUR

Reception at ISS Atrium

5:45-7:00 pm

About the Organizers

Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University

The Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) is a multi-disciplinary academic and research institute established in 2017 at Brac University. The mission of the Centre is “to promote global peace and social justice through the means of education and training, research and advocacy” and with the vision of ‘a just, peaceful and inclusive society’. CPJ is committed to identifying and promoting sustainable and inclusive solutions to a wide range of global concerns, including fragility, conflict and violence.

CPJ is playing a vibrant role for justice and accountability for rohingya refugees in Bangladesh through organising various national and international conferences, seminars and public lectures. CPJ co-organized an international conference on *Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Towards Sustainable Solutions*; and an international seminar on *Accountability: The international Criminal Court and the Rohingya Crisis* with ActionAid Bangladesh and the Center for Genocide Studies of Dhaka University. CPJ is also a co-signatory of Amicus Curiae Observation to the International Criminal Court on behalf of Bangladeshi Non-Governmental Representatives.

Asia Justice Coalition

The Asia Justice Coalition is a network of organizations whose purpose is to promote justice and accountability for gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law in Asia, and to contribute to the fulfillment of the rights of victims and their families.

Working together based on foundational principles of collaboration, complementarity, independence and transparency, the members of the coalition include Amnesty International, Asia Justice and Rights, Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK, Centre for Peace and Justice (Brac University), Centre for Policy Alternatives, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists.

International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam

The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) is an international graduate school of policy-oriented critical social science. It brings together students and teachers from the Global South and the North in a European environment.

Established in 1952 as the International Institute of Social Studies by Dutch universities and the Netherlands Ministry of Education, does research, teaching and public service in the field of development studies and international cooperation. ISS located in The Hague: 'The World's Legal Capital'. On 1 July 2009 ISS became a University Institute of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR).

For further information please contact conclave_rohingya@bracu.ac.bd